

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LONDON 02913 261140Z

42

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AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

USMISSION GENEVA

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USDEL MBFR VIENNA

USCINCEUR

USNMR SHAPE

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TAGS: PARM, NATO, UK, US

SUBJECT: FINANCIAL TIMES ARTICLE ON NUCLEAR COMPONENT OF
MBFR

FOLLOWING ARE MAIN POINTS OF PAUL LEWIS FEBRUARY 19 AR-
TICLE IN THE FINANCIAL TIMES ON U.S. MBFR POLICY:

"THE U.S. ADMINISTRATION IS NOW IN THE PROCESS OF
REVIEWING ITS ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE EUROPEAN FORCE REDUC-
TION NEGOTIATIONS AND MAY SHORTLY SUGGEST TO ITS ALLIES
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PAGE 02 LONDON 02913 261140Z

A CUT IN SOME OF ITS OWN TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS DEPLOY-

ED IN EUROPE AS PART OF A REVISED NATO OFFER TO THE SOVIET UNION.

"AS YET NO FIRM DECISIONS HAVE BEEN MADE AND THERE ARE EVIDENTLY STILL DIFFERENCES OF EMPHASIS WITHIN THE BUREAUCRACY, BUT OVER THE LAST FEW WEEKS SENIOR OFFICIALS HERE HAVE MADE CLEAR THAT THE U.S. IS NOW SLOWLY EDGING TOWARDS WHAT IT REGARDS AS A MORE NEGOTIABLE ALLIANCE POSITION IN THE MBFR TALKS AND THAT THIS COULD WELL INCLUDE A NUCLEAR ELEMENT.

"IN RETURN FOR AN IMPROVED ALLIED OFFER THE U.S. AND OTHER NATO COUNTRIES WOULD NATURALLY EXPECT THE SOVIET UNION TO SOFTEN ITS OWN STANCE AND SHOW SOME (MBFR) SIGN OF BEING INTERESTED IN A MEANINGFUL NEGOTIATION. A NEW ALLIANCE OFFER WOULD THUS CONSTITUTE A CRUCIAL TEST OF RUSSIAN INTENTIONS AND, IF SUCCESSFUL, COULD LEAD TO AN AGREEMENT ON CUTTING CENTRAL EUROPEAN FORCE LEVELS TOWARDS THE END OF THE YEAR.

"TWO RECENT DEVELOPMENTS HAVE ENCOURAGED THE AMERICANS TO BELIEVE THAT THE TIME IS RIPE FOR AN ATTEMPT TO BREAK OUT OF THE (MBFR) IMPASSE WITH A NEW OFFER.

"THE FIRST IS THE LIKELIHOOD THAT THE EUROPEAN SECURITY CONFERENCE WILL REACH A SUCCESSFUL SUMMIT-LEVEL CONCLUSION LATER THIS YEAR.

"THE SECOND FACTOR WAS THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT'S SUD- DEN DECISION IN VLADIVOSTOCK LAST YEAR TO DROP ITS PREVIOUS INSISTENCE THAT AMERICA'S NUCLEAR DEPLOYMENTS IN EUROPE SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN A SECOND SALT AGREEMENT LIMITING THE TWO SUPERPOWERS STRATEGIC ARSENALS.

"AS A RESULT, THE U.S. NOW FEELS FREE TO CONSIDER ADDING THEM AS A SWEETNER TO ITS MBFR POSITION -- AND THIS IS THE PRINCIPAL NEW OPTION UNDER STUDY. BUT A THIRD DOMESTIC CONSIDERATION ALSO POINTS IN THE SAME DIRECTION. THIS IS THE SO-CALLED NUNN AMENDMENT, WHICH REQUIRES THE DEFENCE SECRETARY TO REPORT TO CONGRESS BY UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 03 LONDON 02913 261140Z

APRIL 1 (THE DEADLINE MAY BE EXTENDED) ON AMERICA'S TACTICAL NUCLEAR STRATEGY IN EUROPE, AND IN FACT MASKS GROWING CONGRESSIONAL DISQUIET OVER THE LARGE NUMBER OF TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS STILL STORED THERE -- ABOUT 6,000.

"FINALLY, IN TRYING TO INJECT SOME LIFE INTO THE MORIBUND MBFR NEGOTIATIONS THE U.S. ADMINISTRATION IS

FULLY AWARE OF THE STRONG CONGRESSIONAL PRESSURE FOR A
UNILATERAL REDUCTION IN ITS EUROPEAN FORCE LEVELS --
SOMETHING THAT IT HAS ONLY DEFEATED IN THE PAST BY EM-
PHASIZING THE VIRTUES OF A JOINT CUT IN BOTH SIDES
FORCES."

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